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ABSTRACT

Presented here are a series of classroom exercises in cross cultural communication for teachers of English to students whose native language is Spanish. These classroom exercises focus on a variety of topics including: (1) the definition of a culture; (2) stereotypes; (3) cultural conceptions of space and time; (4) societal values; (5) interpersonal relations; (6) societal change; and (7) language differences in English and Spanish. This guide stresses that in an effective language class, the values, beliefs, and behavior of the culture in which the language is spoken must be discussed, explained, and understood. (Author/APM)

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Curriculum
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EXERCISES IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPANISH SPEAKERS

BY

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EXERCISES IN CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPANISH SPEAKERS

Much has been said and written about cross-cultural communication in recent years, yet very little has been done to apply what has been learned to the English language classroom. The standard methodology texts (Rivers, Lado, Crofts, etc.) all mention cross-cultural communication in passing as something that should be done in class, yet clear explanations of how this might be accomplished are omitted. This is one reason I feel that teachers emphasize the verbal skills and often ignore the cultural values implicit in the language. In my opinion learning a language implies much more than mastering the verbal and written components of communication. Language is not an autonomous, self-determining entity. It is, rather, a product of and is determined by the culture in which it is spoken. Values, concepts, traditions, ideas, behavior, in fact, an entire cosmology, is expressed through language. He who has mastered the verbal and written symbols, but remains ignorant of the culture represented by the language has learned very little. It is important for the language learner to know this and to be aware of and sensitive to the underlying cultural assumptions of which any language is composed.

The language student who is blissfully unaware that by mastering another language he has placed himself into a different culture may never do what he presumably hoped to do when he began his study -- communicate. Communication entails much more than using the right word. It requires a mastery of non-verbal as well as verbal behavior. He who does not know this may make constant mistakes which insult and infuriate the people with whom he speaks even though his grammar and pronunciation are flawless. We need only consider the universally known "ugly American" to understand how true this is. Consequently, I feel that a language teacher must impart more than pronunciation, grammar and reading and writing. He must develop understanding of and sympathy for the culture represented by the language he is teaching. He must develop situations through which cross-cultural communication will take place.

In an effective language class, the values, beliefs and behavior of the culture in which the language is spoken must be discussed, explained, communicated and understood if the class is to prepare students to employ the new language successfully. Students should be shown that our behavior is, to a large extent, determined by our culture. The ways in which we express anger, joy, sorrow, etc. are learned behaviors and fall into culturally accepted patterns. For example, in the U. S., men do not generally cry at funerals while in Latin America they often do. Neither behavior is right or wrong. It is simply appropriate to the culture in which it is performed. It is culturally determined behavior.

Cross-cultural communication is possible only when we have achieved sufficient tolerance to accept behavior different from our own. Often when we are confronted by actions that do not conform to our cultural norms, we judge that behavior as inferior or strange-- we judge it according to our cultural cues instead of those of the culture from which the person performing the behavior comes. Our students must learn to suspend judgment until they can understand what was intended, not just what they thought was intended. If we feel insulted we must be able to ask, "Did that person intend to insult me?" This kind of thinking leads to effective cross-cultural communication. It is precisely this type of sensitivity that should be developed in the language classroom.

The classical example of the failure to understand how another culture works is when a Latin American meets his American friend. The Latin may put his arm around his American friend, who may, if not aware that this is a sign of affection, feel very uncomfortable and after a minute or so escape. The Latin may feel slightly insulted as a result although no insult was meant. The fact is, as we shall see, that these two cultures use space and demonstrate affection differently.

The acceptance of cultural differences that we should emphasize in our classes cannot be brought about only on a conscious, intellectual level. Many of our values and behaviors are subconscious and highly emotional. If we wish to cause the students to empathize with or share the feelings, beliefs, values and behavior of the people whose language they are learning, we must present our cross-cultural communication lessons at the emotional, as well as the intellectual, level. To do this, role playing, discussions, attitude inventories, personality profiles, etc. should be employed while lectures are kept to an absolute minimum in order to have as much student participation as possible.

It is important to emphasize here that culturally determined behavior is a particularly tricky area in which to work. Special care must be taken not to alienate, insult or aggravate any of the participants unless you are convinced within that cultural misconceptions must be challenged. And then it must be done carefully and sympathetically. I am not suggesting that difficult topics be avoided; I am emphasizing, however, that they be handled tenderly. A good way to do this is to ask questions that elicit potentially controversial material from the students, not from you. The you can always say, "You said that, I didn't."

The following pages contain eight exercises designed to introduce teachers of English to Spanish speakers to the concept of cross-cultural communication and to develop the tolerance and understanding necessary to make real communication possible among speakers of English and speakers of Spanish. Many of the exercises are too long to be used exactly as they are. Therefore the instructor must choose those topics he feels will be of interest. Although these exercises were designed to be used in a teacher training program, they can be adapted to general classroom use. The eight exercises are:

1. A definition of culture
2. Stereotypes and how to break them down
3. Use of space

4. Use of time
5. What a society values
6. Interpersonal relationships
7. Change: Future Shock
8. Language Differences

This is certainly not an exhaustive list. Many more topics could and should also be covered. These ideas will, however, enable the English teacher to begin the process of cross-cultural communication. In each case specific ideas are given describing how a certain aspect of culture could be presented. I hope you will adapt these suggestions to meet the needs of your particular class and that you will develop many additional exercises in this very important area of cross-cultural communication.

It is appropriate to begin our discussion of cross-cultural differences by observing how language, one component of culture, reflects the mental outlook of the culture in which it is spoken. Exercise number eight will delve into this area with much greater detail, and so I shall give only one example here. It is, however, a significant one: the use of the word "American".

For people from the United States, "American" is the word we use when we talk about ourselves. We are Americans. We have no equivalent to the Spanish word "estadounidense" and use what for us is the correct term of nationalistic identification, "American". Latin Americans, especially Spanish speakers, use the word differently, however. The word "americano" is used to describe anyone who is from North, Central or South America. All of us from anywhere in the Americas are "americanos".

Those of us who have had sufficient contact with Latin Americans are aware that certain Latins show obvious discomfort when we talk about "Nosotros, los americanos.." I have been told "Excuse me, but you are an Estadounidense." We are all "americanos". To be faithful to both cultures, I refer to myself in English as an "American" and in Spanish as an "Estadounidense".

This brings us again to the topic of cross-cultural communication. In order to differentiate between Latin Americans and Americans in English and in Spanish, I will use Latin American or Latin and their Spanish equivalents "Latino" or "Latinoamericano" and will not use the word "americano" in Spanish. This I feel makes my references clear and remains faithful to the cultural connotations of both languages. Our ignorance of how Latins feel about the word "americano" could cause ill feelings where none are intended. When inter-cultural contact takes place, the members of both cultures must try to understand what the other person intends and be willing to reject culturally determined judgments about behavior as invalid for judging behavior from another culture.

It is our job, then, as language teachers to use the knowledge and information we possess to help our student develop the skills and sensitivity necessary in order to function effectively in a foreign culture. Language is one of these skills, but not the only one. Cross-cultural understanding must also be emphasized if our students are to be prepared to communicate with people from another culture.

Cross-cultural communication means being aware of the ways in which someone belonging to another culture perceives the world differently and how this perception affects his behavior. It means being able to judge someone from another culture by his standards, not just by ours. It requires tolerance and understanding.

Yet cross-cultural communication is not just a separate classroom activity in the way a pattern practice is. Instead, it must be implicit in everything done in class. Constant comparisons should be made between the way things are done, thought about, and expressed here and in the United States. The value of this knowledge should also be taught to the students.

The eight exercises that follow should provide you with some ideas as to how to introduce cross-cultural communication into your classroom. They have been designed to:

1. Make the participants aware of cross-cultural differences by confronting them intellectually and emotionally with these differences.

2. Enable the participants to understand and define these cultural differences and demonstrate how they affect behavior.

3. Help the participants respond to these cultural differences confidently and positively--accepting differences and interpreting behavior on the terms it was meant, not necessarily in the way our cultural prejudices would normally interpret that behavior.

I hope that if you are not already dedicating classroom time to cross-cultural communication you will do so in the near future. It is also my hope that these exercises may be useful to you as you prepare your classes.

EXERCISE ONE: A Definition of Culture

Since we will be discussing the concept "culture" extensively for the next several pages, we should give the term a working definition. It is important to understand that there can be no one definition of a word so well known and often used as "culture". The following definition works for me. If you like it, feel free to use it. If not, feel free to develop your own.

I would like to say something here about logistics. I am most confortable in an informal, relaxed atmosphere. If you are also, I suggest that you do the following:

a. Use first names. Everyone, including the instructor, would be addressed only by his first name. If done correctly this helps to reduce anxiety and make everyone more at ease.

b. Arrange the chairs in a pattern conducive to conversation. The standard rows-facing-forward alignment is satisfactory when the students must passively listen to lectures and copy from the blackboard. (There will be a certain amount of that this first

hour, but not so much that anyone will get a stiff neck from turning to see what's on the board.) I suggest a semicircle in which each student is equally "in" the group. Students whose chairs are more than slightly "out" sometimes feel excluded and consequently do not participate actively in the discussion. For large groups, a series of semicircles increasing in size from the one closest the front of the room could be used.

Now to work. The instructor's role in these exercises is to elicit information from the group and to encourage the participants to discuss in a positive and respectful way what other members of the group have said. Thus the instructor asks questions and guides discussion. This pattern should be set from the outset and only broken when discussion seems non-productive. In this first hour, it would probably be unwise to begin by asking the students to define culture. Most of them have probably never given the term much thought and might not be very interested in the linguistic effort required to produce a satisfactory definition.

I suggest putting on the board a statement similar to this one and having the students decide whether it is acceptable or not and discuss what the definition means. Culture is a complex series of historically developed patterns for living--rational or irrational, conscious or unconscious--which govern our behavior.[1]

After the students have discussed the definition, ask them to list as many components of culture as they can. Start them off by saying that clothing and food (or eating habits) are components of any culture. Put the list on the board and talk briefly about how some cultures the students know of differ according to that component.

There are at least 17 cultural components:

1. Language and gestures
2. patterns of social interaction
3. food
4. clothing
5. music
6. literature and mythology
7. history and traditions
8. other art forms
9. things of value and importance: money, time, wisdom, friendship
10. Family patterns
11. government, politics
12. life styles, work
13. religion, ethics
14. legal system
15. ability to change and become modern
16. science and technology
17. tolerance of others who belong to different cultures

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1 This is a paraphrase of a definition given in Lado, Robert. Linguistics Across Cultures. (U. of Michigan Press. Ann Arbor, 1957) p. 111.

Hopefully, your students will identify most or all of these during the discussion. If they don't, write the remaining components on the board and invite comments as to their applicability and importance.

Close by stating that what is done in any of these areas is taught by the culture (formally, in schools; or informally, by parents or in job training). It is culturally determined behavior. We should expect any other culture to differ from any other in each of these components. Unconsciously, however, we expect people from other cultures to conform to our cultural patterns when they often don't. This leads to misunderstandings and sometimes causes feelings of distrust, anger and confusion. Familiarity with and sensitivity to the other person's culture would eliminate these misunderstandings.

The next several classes are designed to compare and contrast various components of the dominant cultural groups in the U. S. with those of Latin America. We expect that you will realize that although there are many similarities between them, these two cultural groups differ significantly in each of the areas named above.

EXERCISE TWO: Stereotypes

The first step in developing sensitivity towards cross-cultural communication is the refutation of stereotypes. Stereotypes are over-simplifications about a foreign cultural group that are considered valid by the people that hold them. Based on partial information, rather than knowledge, stereotypes can never be correct because they assume that every person belonging to a certain culture is the same as every other person belonging to the same culture. This obviously is not true. Stereotypes allow you to judge a member of a different culture by your values, not by his.

Stereotypes help us explain seemingly strange behavior without having to think about it. For some Guatemalans the fact that many American tourists give money to children on the streets and pay higher prices in the markets can be explained with the stereotype "All Americans are rich". This is a dangerous simplification. Some Americans are rich, as are some Guatemalans. But many are not. Could tourists be less careful with their money for other reasons than excessive wealth (which they may not possess at all)? What other reasons might there be?

Stereotypes are negative because they allow us to decide in advance what a person is like and how he will act. "Oh, he has long hair. I know him. He will do this and that just like all the other hippies." In fact, he may do none of these things.

Two ideas about stereotypes are important: First, almost everyone has them. Many tourists coming here have stereotypes about Latin Americans (perhaps formed by sensational press releases of revolution and violence, Mexican cowboys movies and novels about Central American despotism.) At the same time, many Latins judge him through stereotypes about Americans (perhaps formed by Hollywood movies, hostile press releases, and detective stories). Neither stereotype is valid. Secondly, few cultural groups are monolithic. Many different types of behavior are often possible within a given culture.

People are not all the same. Consequently, people must be judged not by stereotypes, but rather by their own individual actions. Each person is different and should be treated so. Stereotypes inhibit rather than enhance cross-cultural communication and must be disproved.

I have found students generally unreceptive to teacher-led discussions of such dry topics as "stereotypes" so I get to this on another level--the emotional one. The opinion inventory below has worked for me several times to spark student interest and get conversation going. Its purpose is to expose students to their own stereotypes and to convince them that stereotypes must be rejected if communication is to take place.

I suggest that you do not explain to your students what the purpose of the inventory is until the exercise has been completed. If you do, they will be looking for the traps I have laid for them and will probably find them. Let them fall in and then help them out at the end of the class.

The opinion inventory is a sample activity to carry out in class. To begin, tell your students to break into groups of four and read the ten sentences you will give them. Then unanimously they must do one of three things to each sentence:

1. AGREE COMPLETELY with the sentence. This means that you think the sentence is 100% correct.

2. DISAGREE COMPLETELY with the sentence. This means that you think the sentence is 100% wrong.

3. If there is disagreement among the members of your group about the wording of the statements and the group cannot agree or disagree completely, then you must REWRITE the statement so that you agree unanimously.

You may have to simplify or change some of these sentences to make them appropriate for your students.

OPINION INVENTORY

Instructions: Divide into groups of 4. Then read the following statements. With each statement your group must unanimously select one of the following letters:

a. AGREE COMPLETELY. This means that you think the sentence is 100% right.

b. DISAGREE COMPLETELY. This means that you think the sentence is 100% wrong.

c. REWRITE the sentence so everyone can agree on the words.

1. All Americans are rich.

2. Latin American students always come to school late and are irresponsible.

3. Americans are slaves to the clock.

4. Dogs are used in the U. S. as pets and for companionship, while in Latin America they are used as weapons for protection.

5. American girls have a better love life than Latin girls.

6. American manufactured products are better than those made in Latin America.

7. Latin girls are more beautiful than American girls.

8. Latin boys are better boyfriends and dancers than American boys.

9. Latin girls prefer American boyfriends.

10. American are racists, while Latins are not.

Let the students work with the sheet for about twenty minutes or until they seem to have finished and then reconvene the class. Ask each group to comment upon the ten statements. Some will probably agree with some of the statements, while others will disagree, perhaps quite strongly. It doesn't matter. None of the statements of the form is valid for an entire cultural group. They are false generalizations, stereotypes. If the students agree or disagree with any of the above statements, they are reverting to stereotyped judgements: they have fallen into the trap.

Next the class could discuss why each statement represents a stereotype and how these generalizations impede cross-cultural communication.

If your students require a definition of the word "stereotype", try this: A stereotype is an invalid, false and artificial generalization used to conceptualize cultural groups. It denies individuality and is, in addition, often based upon false or incomplete information.

Your students will probably be more sensitive to stereotypes about themselves than to those they hold about others. Ask them what Americans think about Guatemala and Guatemalans. Invite your students to explain what Americans think about Latin Americans in any of the areas of culture listed in exercise one of this paper. That is, "What do Americans think Guatemalan music is like?", etc.

Ask them if these ideas some tourists have about Latin America are valid and why they hold them if they aren't true. Then reverse the process by asking about the United States. Students should soon start to see that the stereotypes then hold about the U. S. are probably no more valid than the ideas tourists generally have about Guatemala.

To begin to understand the United States, your students must come to view it as a complicated combination of many different cultural sub-groups. There are Black Americans, Mexican and Cuban Americans, Spanish Americans, American Indians, Italians, Polish, Irish, Anglo-Saxon, German and Chinese Americans, etc. There are even substantial differences within these sub-groups.

Within the United States, we cannot come to complete agreement about religion, politics, education, economic practices, etc., nor do we want to! Variety makes life interesting. We are learning to respect, to try to understand and to tolerate these differences. These same values must be applied to cross-cultural communication.

The mass media (literature, TV, the movies, the radio, the press) provide great quantities of unexplained information about foreign cultures. We are told and shown what happens, but not why. We are forced to decide this for ourselves--all too often through stereotyped judgments. Your students must be taught that what happens in Florida or Saint Louis or Washington, D.C., or New York City can't tell you what is happening in Dallas, just as what happens in San José or Tegucigalpa can't tell you very much about Guatemala City. Each is a distinct sub-cultural area within a culture, and should be seen as such. Events taking place in these distinct geographical locations may or may not be related to events in any other place. To be understood fairly, they must be judged first as distinct cultural phenomena. When adequate and sufficient information is available, perhaps cultural generalizations can be made.

If your students can be convinced that stereotypes inhibit rather than help facilitate cross-cultural communication, and if they will try to judge people from other cultures by the standards of the foreign culture, not just by the standards of their own culture, and if they can treat each person they meet as an individual distinct from all others, worthy of respect, understanding and tolerance, perhaps productive cross-cultural communication can become a reality and not simply an academic exercise. We fervently hope that this is true.

Now that we have, hopefully, lain Mr. Stereotype to rest forever, we are is somewhat of a quandry. If we are to talk about Latin America or the United States at all, we must use some generalizations or we will get nowhere. In the rest of this paper I will speak in generalities about both the United States and Latin America, but I will try to be faithful to the following criteria:

1. These generalizations are guides or predictors, nothing more. We must never expect everyone's behavior to conform to these generalities.

2. The information upon which the generalizations are made must be valid; that is, can be proved by observation.

3. Negative generalizations will be avoided. The positive aspects of culture will be emphasized to the extent possible. Of course, certain negative factors must be discussed, especially how failure to understand another culture can cause friction, but a generally positive outlook will be our goal.

4. Judgments indicating the superiority or inferiority of one culture in comparing it with another will be avoided to the extent that I am capable of doing so. I recognize that I have a pro-American bias, but I will try to suppress it. I will attempt to discuss the various components of culture as being "different" in Latin America and in the United States, but I will try to avoid indicating that one is "better" than the other.

If you set some ground rules similar to these for your classroom discussions, I think your students will be able to see the difference between these generalizations and the stereotypes we just put to rest. If this difference is clear to them, you are well on the road to fostering genuine cross-cultural communication.

EXERCISE THREE. The use of Space.

For the next several sessions, we will be working with the idea of culturally determined non-verbal behavior. Although most of us are unaware of it, we conform to a system of rules determined by our culture which tell us how to act in certain situations. We expect everyone to act according to these same subconscious rules. To a very great extent the members of our same culture do conform. Yet people from other cultures may act differently in the same situations. For example, American men do not usually hug each other, yet the Latin "abrazo" is very common for Spanish speaking men.

In order, to function effectively in another culture, we must learn to expect varieties of behavior for any given situation, to see each as appropriate and to interpret the message as it was intended, without allowing our cultural prejudices to interfere in the communication process.

In this exercise we're going to look at one area in which our culture determines our behavior: the use of space.

To avoid confusion between inches and centimeters when we talk about space, I usually put the following rough conversion chart on the board:

centimeters	inches	meters	feet
15	6	1	3'4"
30	12	2	6'8"
45	18	3	10'
60	24		
75	30		
90	36		
100	40		

This way everybody understands everyone else's references to distance.

The purpose of the following exercise is to show, I hope, that Latins generally have to get closer to each other to talk than do Americans. Don't tell the students this until after the results have been tabulated.

For this exercise the students should break into groups of two or three. By acting out situations with the other members of their group they should decide upon and write down the distance between speakers that seems most comfortable to them for each of the following:

a. telling a secret to a friend (same sex)

b. an intimate talk with a friend (same sex)

c. an informal talk with an acquaintance (not a close friend) inside a room (same sex)

d. an informal talk with an acquaintance outdoors

e. a formal talk, for example: a speech.

When the students appear to have decided upon the appropriate distances, write their calculations on the board for each category. After the numbers are in for each try to decide upon an average distance for each situation. (You may wish to have some students role play some of these situations but with either too great or too small a distance allowed between the speakers just to see what happens. Hopefully, they'll move to a more comfortable distance without being aware of it.)

Once you have your students' calculations, compare them with those of Dr. Edward Hall, who in the Silent Language[2] gives the following figures for comfortable distances for Americans:

a. telling a secret: 3-6 inches

b. an intimate talk: 12-20 inches

c. an informal talk with an acquaintance inside a room: 20-36"

d. an informal talk with an acquaintance outside: 4 1/2-5 feet

e. a formal talk: about 8 feet

Discuss the differences, if any, between the answers given by your students and those given by Dr. Hall. If the results are equal in all cases, especially for "a", "b" and "c" above, then the exercise did not work as planned. This may be due to several factors:

a. Differences in the use of space no longer exist between Latins and Americans.

b. Your students don't exhibit any differences that do exist.

c. Your students were unable to similate correctly the situations given them.

Regardless of the reason, it has been my experience that Latins do get closer to each other and to anyone else with whom they speak. consequently, if the exercise does not work out, as it occasionally does not, ask the students to observe the behavior of their friends outside the classroom and try to approximate the distances used in the situations given above.

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2 Hall, Edward. The Silent Language (Doubleday. N.Y., 1959) pp. 163-164

If the results show, as they intended to, that Latins must get closer than American to talk, we have been successful. We have defined an area important to cross-cultural communication. When we speak with someone from another culture we must consider how his culture uses space. If not, discomfort and misunderstanding may result. For example, Latins sometimes think Americans are cold because they stay further away when they talk. But Latins sometimes make American uncomfortable because they tend to get in too close--something we interpret as intimacy. This causes all kinds of crises for Americans who feel they are getting sexual mesages (even homosexual ones)when in fact none are intended.

Consequently, in cross-cultural communication, we tend to interpret culturally determined behavior according to the rules of our own culture. In the case given above, communication might be impeded, not by anything that was said, but by the use of space. Our culture can become a barrier to communication unless we are aware of how and why this may happen. This is what we must overcome if we are to communicate with people from other cultures.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION:

1. Shaking Hands. When you meet someone, or say goodby, do you shake hands? In a group, do you shake hands with each person? Why? When you enter a party, do you shake hands with everyone in the party? Why? Compare this with typical American behavior. (We often don't shake hands. We nod, smile or wave instead.) Is either behavior friendlier? Why do you think so? (You might emphasize this point by having the students role play introductions.)

2. When walking with a friend of the same sex, might you put your arm around him/her? Why? (Contrast this with typical American behavior.) Because Latins seem to touch each other more, does this mean they have stronger friendships or are more affectionate? (I think not. I think it means only that emotions are shown differently.)

Assign the following out-of-class experiment to be done before the next session. Ask each student to be conscious of the use of space as he talks to other people. Have them subtly move farther back or get in closer than normal in conversation just to see what happens. How close can you get before the person you're talking with backs up? How far back can you get before the other person moves up? This should help prove that people conform to certain non-verbal rules although they are not conscious of doing so.

For teachers: Does your use of space in the classroom work for you or against you? For example, do you use a podium or sit behind a desk when you teach? Does this make your class more formal than it need be? Do you want your class to be so formal? Do you sit on a raised platform? Why? Have you ever tried sitting down with your students, or standing right in front of them? How would this change the feeling of the class? Do you want any change in this area? (A podium or a desk can inadvertantly be used as a kind of barrier, in fact, a wall, between teacher and student--forbidden territory for students, safe territory for the teacher.)

EXERCISE FOUR: The Use of Time

In this exercise we will compare and contrast Latin American and American use of time. Divide the class into groups of two or three and ask them to write answers for the following questions:

1. Let's say you have a business appointment with someone at 2 p.m. If that person is a Latin American, at what time will you arrive? What time will the other person arrive? If he's late, how long will you wait for him? (Then repeat the questions having the other person be an American.)

2. Let's say you're going to meet a friend at 2 p.m. If your friend is a Latin American, at what time will you arrive? What time will he arrive? If he's late, how long will you wait for him? (Repeat the questions using an American friend.)

3. You invite a group of friends: Latins and Americans for dinner. You want everybody to be there by nine o'clock so dinner can be served. What time will you say for the Latins? What time for the American? At what time will they arrive?

4. You're waiting in a doctor's office. Your appointment was for 3 p.m. It's now 3:15. What do you do? How do you feel? How long will you wait?

5. You have an appointment to meet your boss (a school principal) at 3 p.m. At what time will you arrive? What time will he arrive? Is it important who arrives when? Why?

When the students have answered these questions, reconvene the class and discuss the results. The students' answers should point to another culturally determined behavioral difference: the perception of and the use of time. I think that promptness is an urban phenomenon and as Latin America becomes more urbanized it will become more clock-conscious, yet I think Latins still are more casual than Americans about time.

In Spanish this difference is very obvious, for example, what is the difference between the "hora americana" and the "hora latina"? In addition, in Spanish we say, "Mi reloj está andando bien." (but not "corriendo"), while in English we say, "My watch is running fine." (but not walking).[3]

There anecdotes from my years of living in Latin America should help illustrate how misunderstandings can result from the different uses of time.

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3 Searles, John. "The Child of the Latin Americas" (Unpublished article Penn. State University, University Park, 1967) p. 30.

1. Once some Latin acquaintances invited me to a party that "started" at 8 p.m., thinking I would arrive at 9 or 10. I came at 8:15. They weren't ready yet, and seemed a bit annoyed that I had a arrived before their preparations for the party could be completed. Finally, they asked me to leave and come back in an hour. I was so angry at being so treated that I didn't return; I went to the movies instead. (It is obvious here that I was operating on American, not Latin time. Needless to say, I learned my lesson. Now I go to parties about an hour late.)

2. Another time I invited some Latin friends to my house for a party. I told them to come "after 9", expecting them to arrive between 9:30 and 10:00. Nobody had arrived by 10:00 and so I thought nobody was coming. About 10:15, after I had put everything away, the doorbell rang. My guests had arrived. I got my coca cola, etc. out again and we had our party. (I was still running on American time.)

3. On another occasion, I invited another group of Latin friends for a party. I asked them to come "about 8", so they'd be there by 10 or so. By the time my wife and I had our apartment sent up for the party, it was 7:30. We decided to go out for dinner, convinced that if we returned by about 8:30, we would have time for last minute preparations before anyone arrived. How wrong we were! Our Latin friends thought that since they had been invited to an American's house, they had better arrive promptly. When we returned home at 8:15, six people were waiting for us. (They were operating on American time and were functioning on Latin time.)

Both Latin and American cultures have formal and informal time. Formal time is that which we use to regulate business appointments, starting time at school or work, doctor's appointments, etc. Questions 1, 4 and 5 dealt with formal time. Americans tend to be very precise in their use of formal time. One sociologist has said that Americans..."consider time as a commodity. It can be bought, sold, spent, wasted, made up and measured"[4].

Latins, on the other hand, are, in my opinion, less compulsive and also a bit less efficient than Americans in their use of formal time. Americans generally don't like to be kept waiting on the formal time scale. After about ten minutes, we start to get angry. Latins dealing with Americans should be aware of this. How long on the formal time scale will a Latin wait before he starts to get angry?

Informal time is that which we use to regulate our social life. Dates, sports, parties, etc. usually run on informal time. Questions 3 and 4 as well as my three anecdotes dealt with the realm of informal time. Here, again, I think Latins are generally more casual than Americans in the use of informal time. Latins may show up very late for a social event without offering any explanation, or even feeling one is necessary. Americans, on the

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4 Hall, Edward. The Silent Language. p. 132

other hand, generally expect social engagements to begin within an hour of the appointed time. Latins dealing with Americans on a social level should be aware of this.

It would also be useful here, I think to compare a typical day in Latin America and in the United States. To make them as similar as possible, let's compare an imaginary American urban office worker with his Latin counterpart. What time will the American and the Latin get up, eat breakfast, leave for work, start work, stop for lunch, start work in the afternoon, leave work, get home, eat dinner, go to bed? How long will each meal take for the American and for the Latin? How do these different uses of time make life different?

EXERCISE FIVE: What a Society Values.

This exercise is designed to bring into focus contrasts in the value systems of American and Latin American cultures. The procedure planned to do this is group discussion, although there are two short written activities at the begining.

I Things you value.

Have the students think very carefully for a minute and then make a list of the five things that they value most. (They may be abstract or specific.) Remind them that we said "valuable". This does not necessarily mean "expensive".

Now discuss their lists. Did they mention only materialistic considerations? Or did they list intangibles (health, family, respect, honor, friendship)? I would expect a Latin to mention more intangibles than an American, who is generally more materialistic. I do think that these attitudes are changing in both cultures. I think that Americans are becoming more concerned about the intangibles (I am, anyway), while the Latin is becoming more materialistic.

(This exercise could also be done another way. You could write on the board or ditto off a list of about fifteen items of value, some materialistic and some intangible and have the students make their five choices from your list. This would provide you with easier-to-tabulate results, but would also limit the possibilities for the students.)

II Age versus Youth: The value of words.

Many words in English and Spanish have translation equivalents which do not really mean the same in the second language as they do in the first. Two of these words are "old" (viejo, anciano) and "young" (joven). I am interested here in their use in describing people. For example, does "an old man" mean the same as "un anciano"? I think not. I also consider the difference an important one. But let's see what your students think.

Write the phrases "old man" and "anciano" on the board. Ask your students to try to think as Americans for a minute and write three synonyms for the word "old". Then ask them to think as Latin and write three synonyms for the word "anciano". Repeat the process with the words "a young man" and "un joven". Now compare their answers. Did they show any difference in their choices of synonyms in English and in Spanish? If so, is the difference significant? Why the difference? Ask the students if their parents would have written the

same words. Why or why not? (This process could be repeated with the words "old" (viejo) and "new" (nuevo).

It has been my experience that American society is more fascinated by anything new or anyone young than is the Latin society.. How old are the members of the Pepsi Generation (for those who think young)? For whom are clothing, automobiles, movies, records, etc. designed? We Americans, tend to think of "old" as "bad, useless, no longer functional". We use it sometimes as a term of derision; Latin society, on the other hand, I think values that which is old more than we do. "Anciano" is often a term of respect. (There are some obvious exceptions to this, as to all generalizations. Think of the Sam Ervin cult in the U. S. right now. I don't think, however, that this negates my original premise.)

Let's compare for a minute the life of an elderly person in the U. S. with the life of an elderly person in Latin America. If you are a seventy-year-old Guatemalan, where will you probably live? With whom? What will you do with your time? Will you be happy? Now ask the same questions, except this time they will be about a seventy-year-old American. Did your students indicate any difference in life styles between Latins and Americans? What do these differences say about how each culture values old age?

Old Folks Homes are another indications of the value a society places on its elderly members. How many Old Folks Homes are there in Guatemala? How many are there in the U. S? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having institutions for the aged. I am reminded of a story about Brownsville, Texas, where a home for Mexican-Americans elderly was built. Once it was completed, social workers started looking for candidates to live in the home. They were not aware that in a Latin family, the grandparents live at home, just as do the children and grand-children. Americans are learning that a man's life is not over when he retires. Latins have known this all along.

Twentieth century American literature contains many examples of the loneliness and sadness of being old and without a family. Frost's "Death of the Hired Man". Steinbeck's "The Great Mountains", Soroyan's "My Heart's in the Highlands" and many other literary works develop this theme. If your students appear interested in this theme, perhaps these or similar works could be read and discussed in conjunction with the cross-cultural exercises,

III Consumer Culture

Take a quick inventory of your students. How many have in their houses a TV, a radio, a stereo, a refrigerator, a stove, a movie or slide camera and projector, a water heater, an electric fry pan, a blender, an electric toaster, an electric toothbrush, etc. How many have cars? How old are these possessions? How many did they have ten years ago? This should prove that Latin America is rapidly becoming the consumer culture that the U. S. already is.

It is common knowledge that almost everyone who wants them, even those on welfare, has a TV and a car in the U. S. These are no longer considered as luxuries, but almost as necessities. Many people in the U. S. are caught up in the "keep up with the Joneses" spiral. Everything must be new. As soon as something is more than two or three years old, it gets traded in on a newer model whether the older one still works well or not.

Yet, everyone in the U. S. is not satisfied with the consumer society in which we live. Think of the revolution caused by the hippies simply because they prefer not to buy anything if they can help it. Everybody from barbers to salesmen is mad at them!

Contemporary America is in the midst of a consumer revolt. Buyers today want what they purchase to function well and to last a long time. Concepts such as 'preplanned obsolescence' (a process by which obsolescence is built into a product, that is, it is built to break down after a year or so--just as soon as the guarantee runs out!) are being seriously challenged and defeated. Did you know that the average lifetime of a car in the U.S. is 5 years or 50,000 miles? (What percentage of cars in Latin America are more than 5 years old and have been driven more than 80,000 kilometers? My experience tells me that the percentage is a high one!)

Many times in the States when we buy something we get a guarantee with so many loopholes (exceptions) that it is practically worthless. Frequently we buy products with shoddy workmanship. But this is changing. We are learning to demand a better product. (Try to get a copy of Consumer Reports to show the class.) Ads now mention quality control. American Motors advertised a superior guarantee and last year its sales went up. Buyers are getting smarter and more demanding.

Has the consumer revolution hit Latin America? Ask your students for a Spanish equivalent for "keeping up with the Joneses". (I don't think there is one--yet.) What criteria do they use when they buy new products? Do they look at the guarantees? Have they been satisfied with the products they have bought? If not, what can they do about it?

The subject of "hippies" was mentioned a minute ago. This topic usually touches a tender spot in most people, so perhaps we should talk about it for a moment. What do "hippies" value? What do they reject? (Some have rejected the consumer culture altogether, while many have simply reduced conspicuous consumption.) Are hippies a positive or a negative influence? Why? How does Latin America generally see them? How does American culture see them? (Remember the movie "Joe"?) Are these stereotypes or valid generalizations?

IV. Work

It has been my experience that work is generally a more important part of the American's life than for the Latin. I have included a few questions here to see if your students are aware of any differences that may exist and the effect these differences may have on the respective cultures.

What is the purpose of work for Latins? What is it for Americans? Do the two cultures view work differently? How so? Why? In both cultures, who gets the best salaries? Why? Is this as it should be? At what age do middle class people begin to work in Latin America? In the U.S.? Does this cause any significant cultural differences? (I started working part-time at 14 as a delivery boy in a flower shop. I almost never asked my parents for money because I had my own. Part-time jobs for students are fairly common in the United States. Is this a common experience in Latin America also?)

How did your students answer these questions? Did they feel that work is more important for Americans? I think so. It seems to me that Americans generally find their self identity and their sense of worth through their work while the Latin may just as often find his through the family and in social relationships.

V Wealth versus Poverty

It is common knowledge that wealth and poverty are not purely economic considerations. A man may own practically nothing yet be rich in happiness and affection, for example. Yet, in both Latin and American societies we generally speak of a person as "rich" or "poor" because of the amount of money he has. Yet the criteria for making these judgements are not the same in both cultures. Other less obvious factors such as education, upward mobility, health care, etc. must be taken into account. When they are not, misunderstandings often occur. It is perhaps for this reason that I am told occasionally by Latins that those considered to be living in disadvantaged areas of the U.S. are not really poor. They have what would be in Latin America good salaries, cars, T.V.'s, etc. How can they be living in poverty? Yet, living in poverty they are.

One example should help show how the Latin and American cultures set different standards for what is considered "poverty". El Gráfico, a Guatemalan newspaper, on October 7, 1973 figured that a family of eight could live in poverty, but live, on $50 per month ($600) per year in Guatemala City. U.S. News and World Report, May 28, 1973 lists $5170 as the minimum yearly salary needed for a family of four in a U. S. city. That's the minimum. Anything below that is poverty. Teachers in Guatemala earn about $3000 a year and they are considered middle class. Thus, there is considerable disagreement between the two cultures as to when someone is living in poverty and when he is not.

Life styles among the rich and the poor also vary significantly in those two cultures. Let's have a look. Ask your students the following:

If a person is wealthy in Latin America, how will he have made his money? What will he buy or own? Where will he educate his children?

Now compare this with a wealthy American. In many cases the American will be an industrialist or a large businessman, while the Latin will probably be a landowner or landlord, or a politician or General Somoza in Nicaragua. The American may have made a lot of his money himself while the Latin's wealth is probably inherited. In the U.S., however, both inherited money and self-made money can be found. Rockefeller didn't make his money, but J. Paul Getty did. Do these differences between the life-styles of the wealthy say anything about cultural differences? What?

Now ask your students about those who are considered to be living in poverty. If a person is poor in Latin America.

1. Describe his dwelling. Will he live in the city or in the country, or in both areas?

2. Will he be single, married, separated, divorced? How big is his family?

3. What will his job be? How much will he earn? How much will he need to spend in order to live?
4. What education will he have?
5. What health care will he and his family receive?
6. What are his hopes and plans for the future?
7. Describe his social life. (What does he do on Saturday night?)
8. What is his racial background?
9. What possessions does he own?
10. Does he receive economic or material assistance from the government or private agencies?
11. Does he feel that it is fair and just that he should live as he does?

When the students have answered these questions, ask them to work through them again answering for a person who lives in poverty in the U.S. Do their answers show differences between the two cultures? Are these differences significant? How so?

I think that there is a significant difference between how Latins and how Americans view poverty. I also think that the difference is an important one. Traditionally, the Latin American is more resigned to his poverty. Literature about Latin America is filled with examples of the dignity and resignation of the Latin American poor. Madre Milpa, The Old Man and the Sea, the poetry of Prime Castrillo and Atahualpa Yupenqui reflect this. The Latin has his pride, his honesty, and is content with that. "Soy pobre, pero honrado," is more than just a folk saying. It reflects a philosophy widespread among the Latin poor. Poverty is generally accepted as inevitable in Latin America, although a growing number of socially aware Latins are trying to improve the lot of the common man.

In the U.S., poverty is seen as an evil of society that must be eradicated. It has been called a "sickness" of society. Several American writers, James Baldwin and Eldridge Cleaver among them, emphasize anger at what they consider exploitation of the poor by American society. Money, energy and time have been and are being spent in the U.S. in the hope of elimination of poverty. But success is elusive, although progress has been made. The United States Information Service's "El Perfil de los Estados Unidos" says that only 20% of American workers earn less than $5000 annually. This means that 80% of American workers do not live in poverty.

In summary, it seems to me that the American and Latin American cultures are moving closer together in what they hold to be of value. I did not discuss the middle class in this exercise because I think that to a large extent those of us in the middle class in both cultures share many of the same values and aspirations. Traditionally, Latin America has valued intangibles: honor, wisdom, friendship, etc., while the American has valued possessions. But this is changing rapidly. As consumer power (money) comes into the hands of the majority in Latin America, the traditional values will be challenged, as they have been in the U.S.

Contemporary America with its Jesus freaks, its seekers after meaning in life through meditation, drugs, withdrawal from society, etc., and its alienated "silent majority" is proof that the consumer society alone does not give meaning to life. The tangible cultural values that Latin America has preserved are those which we seek. Perhaps we will be able to learn from each other.

EXERCISE SIX. Interpersonal Relations

In this exercise we will discuss such cultural phenomena as sex roles, women's liberation, nuclear versus extended families, child raising and getting things done within one's culture. We will, because of special and temporal limitations, just touch on each of these topics. If any of them seem to interest your students, I suggest that you go into them in greater depth.

I. Sex Roles

Ask your students the following:

a. In your school, would you prefer a male or a female principal? Why?

b. Do you prefer male or female teachers? Why?

c. When a man and a woman are married, should they have similar or distinct roles in the marriage? If different, why should there be this difference? If someone must stay home with the children, who should it be? Why? Could the husband's and the wife's roles be changed around? Why? Should they be changed? Would Americans answer these questions the same way you have? How would their answers be different?

The answers to these questions should show you how traditional your students are. They are certainly entitled to their opinions, but your job as a teacher is to open their minds to new ideas as well. The twentieth century has proven rather definitely that there are very few social functions that women perform better than men or vice versa. Yet certain cultures maintain that one sex must be superior to the other.

In the U.S., the idea of female inferiority has been effectively challenged and in Latin America, it is being challenged now. The Women's Liberation movement has opened eyes to unquestioning prejudices in many areas of human relations. We have learned that women can do almost everything men can do and vice versa. But I think we can safely say that the Women's Liberation movement has not hit Latin America yet. The question is, should it? What would happen in Latin America if Women's Liberation became a strong force? What do your students think?

If your students appear interested in talking more about Women's Liberation, you could put the following tenets of the Movement on the board for their consideration:

1. Equal opportunity for employment and promotion in any job. No discrimination in hiring or promotion based on race, sex, religion or country of birth.

2. Pay equal to that given to men for equal work.
3. Abortion and other birth control devices available for all women through federal subsidies.
4. Free child care centers.
5. Equal representation of men and women in all areas of society, including business management and politics.

These ideas were made in the U.S. Are they applicable to Latin America? Which ones? Could they be implemented in Latin America? How?

Ask your students if they think a cross-cultural marriage, that is with an American husband and a Latin wife or the reverse, would cause any special problems? If so, what kind of problems? How could these problems be solved?

II. Extended and Nuclear Families

Have your students explain which family members will live in a Latin American household and then compare this with a typical household in the States. Is there any difference? Explain it. Will a Latin household usually have a maid? Why? Will most American families have maids? Why? Could people live in Latin America without maids? Why? How would this change life styles? What are the advantages of living in a Latin style family? What are the advantages of living in an American style family?

A household that includes cousins, aunts and grandparents is considered an extended family. Latins traditionally live in this type of household. Americans, on the other hand,tend to live in nuclear families, which contain only the immediate family.

Generally speaking, the extended family is good for children because there is always someone around willing to play or talk with them. The nuclear family would seem to make a child more secure and independent by allowing him to be alone more often. Nuclear households also provide more privacy for their members. Ask your students which they think is better and why.

III. Child Raising

Have your students describe a typical day in the life of a Latin three-year-old. (To facilitate comparison with American culture, let's choose a middle class, urban child.) What does he do all day? Will he be exposed to toys and books? What kind? How many? (My wife, a Colombian, was shocked recently when she saw American girls playing cowboys with the boys. She expected the girls to be playing something more pacific.) How will a Latin child be disciplined? Will he be left alone often? Compare this with the life of an American child. Are there significant differences? Explain them. What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of each style of child raising?

IV. Education

Do your students see any differences in the formal educational process in the U.S. and in Latin America? If not, these questions may prove useful in pointing out a few of the most obvious differences:

What percentage of children goes to school in Latin America? What percentage finishes high school? What percentage finishes college? Compare this with the U.S. Of those who attend school in each culture, what percentage goes to public schools and what percentage goes to private schools? What is the average number of students per class? Are the classes segregated sexually? Must uniforms be worn? Why? (Latins tell me that uniforms help promote social equality. That is, if everyone wears the same clothes, the differences between rich children and poor children are not obvious. In the U.S. I think students dislike uniforms. They remind us of enforced conformity and militarism, both of which are extremely unpopular in contemporary America.) Are there any significant differences between the two educational systems? Explain the relative advantages and disadvantages of each.

V. Getting Things Done

Which do your students think is the more effective way of obtaining results in a bureaucracy, through official channels, or through friends and relatives? Put another way, the question is, if you have to get a driver's license, how will you do it? How would an American do it? Usually a Latin will look for a friend who works in the bureaucracy, or who knows the system. The American, on the other hand, will often brave the official channels, unless there is a friend at hand. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each method?

In this exercise we have touched upon several areas where interpersonal relationships differ in Latin America and the United States. If your students are aware of these differences and can accept them with objectivity, they should be able to function more effectively in American culture.

EXERCISE SEVEN: Change (Future Shock)

Change is one of the most important words in the United States today. The world is in perpetual motion. Everything keeps changing. U.S. kids, who have been brought up on the respectual notion of television, grow up expecting the world to be different every day. They like change. But how about the rest of us? How do we react in a world that is different every time we look at it? This exercise will discuss the concept of change: what it is, how it affects us and why knowledge about it is important.

To begin, let's return briefly to the definition of culture given in Exercise One. Did important changes occur in the areas listed in the definition between 1930 and 1945?, between 1945 and 1960?, between 1960 and 1974? In which time period did the most change take place? Can you say why more changes occurred during that period? Change in the world is going in an upward spiral. Things change faster and more often every year. Think of household appliances. How many were available before 1930? How many are available now? How old is the lazer beam? When did man first set foot on the moon? Since 1945, the number of manufactured products doubles about every 15 years, and will continue to do so. For every 100 products in 1945, there will be 300 by 1975.

The advent of the computer, the lazer, monorails, solar energy and cassette television can only mean that the process of change will accelerate

in the near future.

Change can be a positive or a negative factor in our lives. Some people, like the Russian Jews of "Fiddler on the Roof", try to elude change by maintaining strict and exact traditions: ". . . Because of our traditions, we've kept our balance for many years. Here in Anatemka, we have traditions for everything: how to sleep, how to eat, how to work, how to wear clothes. For instance, we always keep our heads covered and always wear little prayer shawls that shows our complete devotion to God. You may ask, 'How did this tradition get started?' I'll tell you: I don't know. But it's a tradition and because of our tradition, everyone of us knows who he is and what God expects him to do . . . Traditions, traditions. Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as a fiddler on the roof." (From: Prologue to "The Fiddler on the Roof".)

Consider for a moment the Indians in the U.S. and in Latin America. They have used their traditions as a barrier to protect themselves from the white man's world.

Other people have been unable to develop satisfactory defenses. Alvin Toffler in his book, Future Shock states that unwanted and confusing rapid change may actually cause illness.

"Ask a man to change his life too quickly and even if he doesn't feel physically ill, he is likely to plunge into bewilderment, anxiety and sick irritability. . . His personal priorities become confused. He careens through his personal world, frenetically on the go, but without any durable sense of direction. Things go wrong. As they do, he lashes out senselessly, even at those who want to help him. Eventually, after a crescendo of anger or aggression, he collapses into emotional exhaustion. What follows is an apathy so deep as to be self-destructive. Some of today's young people who have chosen to drop out or disengage -- holing up in waves and communes, looking blankly at the sky, may well be suffering from this last stage of overstimulation. For others drug abuse is the end point of future shock. . . Much of the anxiety irrationality and seemingly senseless violence in today's society may also be symptoms of future shock." (Future Shock, pp. 343-367.)

Toffler gives us numerous examples of how the process of change is accelerating.

1. POPULATION:
   In 1850, there were 4 cities with a population of over one million; in 1900, there were 19; in 1960 - 141 (and growing fast). (From: Future Shock, p. 23.)
2. TRANSPORTATION:
   3000 B.C. - chariot. Speed -- 20 mph. Nothing significant done for 4700 years. Then in 1784, the first mail coach was used in England. Speed -- 10 mph.
   1825: steam locomotive. Speed -- 13 mph.
   1880: "modern" locomotive. Speed -- 100 mph.
   1931: airplane. Speed -- 400 mph.
   1960: rocket. Speed -- 4000 mph.
   1970: moon rocket. Speed -- 18,000 mph.

(Although we discuss 5000 years, every new invention took place in the last 200) (From: Future Shock, p. 26)

3. SCIENCE:
TIME WASTED FROM INVENTION TO PRACTICAL APPLICATION. 90% of all scientists that ever lived are alive right now.
1714: first English typewriter invented.
Sold commercially in 1850 = 136 years
1836: grain-thresher-combine invented.
Sold commercially in 1930 = 94 years
electric motor = 65 years
vacuum radio tube = 33 years
x-ray tube = 18 years
nuclear reactor = 10 years
radar = 5 years
transistor = 3 years (Future Shock, pp. 27-28)
(Meaning: Just when we think we understand our world and how it works, a new invention comes along and changes everything.)

4. LEARNING: TRANSFER OF INFORMATION
Let us say that man has been developing western civilization for 10,000 years. For the first 9,500 information was transmitted orally: teacher to student. Manuscripts written by hand were also used, but they were difficult to make. Their distribution was also severely limited. Revolution No. 1: Gutenburg printing press (450 years ago)
"Prior to 1500. . . Europe was producing books at a rate of 100 per year. This means that it would take a full century to produce a library of 100,000 titles. By 1950 four and a half centuries later. . . Europe was producing 120,000 titles. What once took a century now took only 10 months. . . By the mid-sixties the output of books on a world scale had reached 1000 copies per day." (Future Shock: pp. 30-31)

Thus, living in the twentieth century is very different for man than living in any other century. "Things, places, people, organizations and information will in effect speed through his life, compelling him to learn, dislearn and relearn. . . (Toffler: "Coping with Future Shock", Playboy, March 1970, p. 89)

Our personal lives are also changing rapidly. Have you ever heard or said anything similar to this? "Until about ten years ago, Guatemala City was a nice place to live. Now everything has changed. It's become almost impossible to live here." This was told to me by a twenty-year-old University of San Carlos student.

Here are a few questions to show just how fast things change:

1. What's the population of Guatemala City?
2. Who's the President of Chile? Who's the V.P. of the United States?
3. To what country do the Bahamas belong? (independent 1973)
4. When was the new jet Aurora airport built? Where will the airport be in 5 years?
5. What's on the corner of 12th Calle, 7th Avenue, Zone 1? (a Dairy Queen)
6. Did your parents live in the same house for their whole lives?
7. Do you live in the same house you lived in as a child? (I have lived in 14 houses since I was 5 -- 11 of these in the last 6 years.)
8. How many different jobs did your father have?

9. Do you have the same job you had 15 years ago? 10 years ago? 5 years ago? (I have had 4 in the last 6 years.)
10. Do you have the same friends you had 15 years ago? 10 years ago? 5 years ago?

Consider briefly 3 generations of your family: your grandparents, your parents and you. Have your life styles changed during these three generations? How about life for your children or your grandchildren? Will it be the same as yours? (It most certainly will not!) Consider clothing. What would your grandparents say to mini-skirts, hot pants, bright ties, purple shirts and throw-away paper dresses? Would non-returnable, throw-away containers and their resultant litter impress your grandparents? Have you ever traveled on an airplane? Did your parents, your grandparents? How will your children travel?

As we have seen, every ten years or so, the world manifests incredible change. In many ways, a new world is created every ten years of so. Can we live comfortably and maintain our sanity in such a world? Toffler thinks we can: ". . . The secret of coping with future shock is not, therefore, to suppress change, which cannot be done, but to manage it... If we opt for rapid change in certain sectors of life, we can consciously attempt to build stability zones elsewhere. Nor is this a purely negative process -- a struggle to suppress or limit change. The issue for any individual attempting to cope with rapid change is how to maintain himself within his adaptive range and, beyond that, how to find the optimum point at which he lives at peak effectiveness."
. . . (A noted scientist says, "Some people... achieve a certain sense of serenity, even in the midst of turmoil, not because they are immune to emotion, but because they have found ways to get just the 'right' amount of change in their lives." The search for that optimum may be what much of the pursuit of happiness is about. (From: Future Shock, pp. 379-382.)

Culture shock, the brother of future shock, is something anyone who has lived in a foreign culture is aware of. Living in a different culture, we find that the unconscious cues by which we operate, our habits, customs, the way we normally do things have been turned around. We may find ourselves unable to function, just as the person who suffers from future shock, until we discover some kind of cultural home-base which gives us a feeling of stability. Sometimes we find that stability in a foreign culture by seeking out those elements that are most like our own culture. I, for example, have American friends, go to American movies, listen to U.S. music and read about the U.S. -- in English -- when I start feeling uneasy about being in Latin America. But usually I feel quite comfortable in a Latin environment. After all, I've been in it for almost 5 years.

Discuss the concept of culture shock with your students. Have they ever experienced it? Do they know anyone who has? How was it controlled?

Cultures, even those of the 20th century with its rapid changes, have stability built into them somewhere, or they could not last. Professor John Searles of Pennsylvania State University[5] suggests that Latin America finds

5 Searles, John. The Educating of Latin Americans. (Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa.), p. 20.

stability in its family structure. The church also provides a certain linear stability. Governments in Latin America change rather often due to revolution and coups but the family and the church remain stable.

The U.S. on the other hand, has a very stable government. We find our sense of cultural stability in our government on the local, state and federal levels. Americans also belong to large numbers of clubs and organizations, which also provide stability. Family life in the U.S., conversely, is somewhat less important than it is in Latin America.

The understanding of change as a major factor in our cultural life has made a tremendous impact upon the field of education. Suddenly we see that yesterday's knowledge may no longer be correct tomorrow. What we learned in the past may be antiquated, even wrong, now, or sometime in the near future. We must change our educational orientation to prepare our children for the future — for continual change. Less emphasis will be placed upon learning "facts" in the future, since facts change so quickly. Scientific and humanistic principles will be stressed instead. Students must escape the consequences of future shock.

If we are to maintain these traditions which give us individual and group identity, we must protect our culture. We must be able to change, since change is inevitable, but we must not abandon our past in order to participate in the future. Our cultural heritage must be studied and protected. It is in the schools and in the homes that this will be done.

EXERCISE EIGHT: Language

Your students are certainly aware that English and Spanish are different languages. But do they know <u>how</u> different they are? They probably think that English and Spanish contain distinct sounds and words. They may even concede to a different grammatical system. But the differences are far more basic and complex than just these three obvious ones. Let's have a look.

In this exercise we will show your students how different English and Spanish really are and what they will have to learn before they can speak a second language. Our purpose is not to frighten or frustrate them, but rather to fascinate them by showing the infinite possibilities for growth and change any language contains.

The following criteria would be valid in analyzing any language, but our purpose is to contrast Spanish and English and we shall take our examples from these two.

I. A definition. There are as many definitions for "language" as there are for "culture". Here's mine: Language is a complex series of subconscious speech habits that combine to make communication possible. (Notice that I do not mention writing. We are concerned primarily with spoken language. The examples that follow are based on the assumption that language is speech and that writing is a derived form of language — speech written down.)

Any language contains the following components:

1. sounds
2. syllables and juncture (pause) between syllables
3. words and function words

4. word order
5. word derivations
6. grammatical endings and usage
7. intonation
8. stress
9. ideas or sentences
10. gestures
11. idiomatic expressions

English and Spanish exhibit similarities and differences in each of these components. When speaking a second language, we make mistakes principally because we use the habits of our native language instead of those of the second language. This is Native Language Interference. For example:

1. Sounds - Spanish and English both contain the b,d,g,p,t,k consonant sounds. But Spanish has two b's, two d's and two g's, depending on where they occur; while English has but one sound for each. Observe: dedo, la dama, vivir, babero, bigote, mago, gato, la gata. (Spanish has a special sound for the intervocalic b,d,g.) Spanish speakers tend to produce these same sounds in English, and commit, consequently, pronunciation errors. They may mispronounce the b in a boy, the g in the girl, and the d in the door. Conversely, if an English speaker uses his native language habits, how will he pronounce the Spanish words above?

2. Syllable division is important in writing - In the spoken language, we refer to the pause made between syllables as juncture. Spanish plus juncture, the pause that marks the end of a syllable is much more regular than English plus juncture. In Spanish, syllables are generally divided after a vowel if only one consonant sound follows (as is usually the case). For example, "Yo quie-ro sa-ber co-mo se lla-ma U-sted."

   English plus juncture is much more complicated, depending mainly upon whether the vowel sound in the syllable to be divided is stressed or unstressed. Because of native language habits, a Spanish speaker may say "The-ma-ni-sold" instead of "The-man-is-old."

3. Words and the various categories of words are used differently in Spanish and in English. For example:

   3a. Cognates and False Cognates - Many Spanish and English words are almost identical in spelling, pronunciation and meaning. These words are cognates. Cognates prove the common Latin and Greek heritage both languages share. The following are cognates: science, ciencia; medicine, medicina; poet, poeta; dictator, dictador; music, música; etc.
   However, all cognates even if they look and sound the same, do not mean the same thing. Some are false cognates. They mean one thing in Spanish and another in English. Some examples of false cognates are library, librería; college, colegio; football, fútbol; lecture, lectura; realize, realizar; and many others.

   3b. Noun gender - All Spanish nouns have grammatical gender while English nouns have only natural gender. English speakers learning Spanish find grammatical gender confusing and often amusing. For example, we find it difficult to comprehend that things, which are neuter in English are either masculine or feminine in Spanish. There are "la mesa", "La silla", "la

puerta", all feminine but then "el piso", "el libro", and "el lápiz" — all masculine!
Even more amazing than this for English speakers is that body parts all have gender and that this gender may differ on the same person. Take my case. My birth certificate reads male. I believed this with no identity crisis until I learned Spanish. I learned that I have masculine hair (el pelo), teeth (los dientes) and arms (los brazos), but a feminine nose (la nariz), face (la cara), and legs (las piernas) and ears of both genders (el oído, la oreja)! Now I'm a bit confused. Can you blame me?

3c. Spanish uses "el" in many cases where English would not use its translation equivalent "the". For example "La Habana", "El Ecuador", "La Argentina", and "El Inglés" (the language). English would not use "the" in any of these cases.

3d. Splits - Often words do not have one-to-one translation equivalents in another language. The word must split to cover a variety of meanings. For example, the word "be" in English can be translated 5 ways in Spanish, depending on the context: ser: Soy hombre. Estar: Estoy consado. Haber: Hay 25 estudiantes en la clase. Tener: Tengo frío. And hacer: Hace calor.

Other examples of English words whose meaning splits in Spanish are leg (pierna, pata), ask (pedir, preguntar), for (por, para) and corner (esquina, rincón). Some Spanish words whose meaning split in English are hacer (make, do), decir (tell, say), historia (history, story) and conocer (meet, know). Students who have not learned to use splits correctly will probably have difficulty being understood in a second language.

3e. Descriptive words in Spanish that don't exist in English - Spanish possesses a wealth of descriptive nouns that cannot be translated into English as nouns, but require whole phrases. For example "manco" would be "one-armed man". Other examples of this are "chato", "canche", "bizco", "tuerto" and "mocho".

3f. Homophones - Spanish has far fewer homophones than English. "Votar and botar" are homophones for many Spanish speakers as are "casar", "Cazar" and "Bazo, vaso". English, however, has a large number of them. For example: beat/beet, Hear/here, knew/new, hole/whole, etc. Homophones may prove difficult for your students.

3g. Semantics (meaning) - Although two words may have exact translation equivalents, they may not really have the same meaning in both languages. Let's take a common example: dog and perro. English speakers usually think of dogs as warm friendly home companions. Spanish speakers (my wife, for instance) thinks of dogs as ferocious, dangerous weapons used to protect private property. What a difference!

Dr. John Martin in The Grammatical Structures of English and Spanish (p. 278) lists the following translations he feels connote different meanings. Iglesia/church, finca/farm, estudiante universitario/university student, policia de tránsito/traffic cop, etc.

3h. Function words. Function words are all those words that aren't nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns or adverbs. They convey no real meaning in a sentence. They simply perform a grammatical

function. Some kinds of function words are:

1. Determiners. A, an, the, possessive adjectives and numbers are determiners. In Spanish these words have plurals, but not in English.
2. Auxiliary Verbs: Do, will and shall (which have no Spanish equivalents) as well as may, can, might, could, would, should, have to and be going to are English auxiliaries.
3. Prepositions: Translation equivalents for prepositions are particularly difficult to pick. For example, "en": "en el libro" (in the book), "en la mesa" (on the table), and "en casa" (at home). Careful study is required here.

4. Word Order. Spanish adjectives usually go after the nouns they modify, while in English they precede the nouns. Compare "carro rojo" with "red car". Adverbs usually immediately follow the verbs they modify in Spanish, but in English they often go at the end of the sentence. Compare "Yo hablo muy bien el inglés" with "I speak English very well."

5. Word Derivation. Derivation is the process by which one word is formed (derived) from another. Play gives us player, playful and playfully. Spanish derivational habits are often similar to those of English, but occasionally they are not. For example, "científico" can be scientist or scientific. Other examples in which Spanish derivation does not coincide with that of English are "muerto" (Ha muerto: He has died, and Está muerto: He's dead.) "mecánico" (mechanic, mechanical) and "sabio" (wise man and wise (adjective).

6. Grammatical endings and usage.
   a. Adjectives and numbers in Spanish can have plurals.
   b. Adjectives and numbers in Spanish change endings according to the noun they modify: libro rojo, caja roja, libros rojos, cajas rojas.
   c. Subjects can be omitted in Spanish. We can simply say "Corre." (He or she runs.) The subject becomes clear from the context. The reflexive "se" can be used to create a sense of mystery. "Se rompió" means something like "I didn't break it; it just broke." Some verbs in Spanish cannot have a subject: llueve, hace frío.

7. Intonation. Intonation is the relative rise or fall of the voice when an utterance is pronounced. Spanish is more regular in its intonation patterns than is English. Veo al hombre and Lo veo a él. Consequently, they will say: I see the man and I see him. The second should be I see him.

8. Stress.
Stress patterns are important in pronunciation obviously. English has unstressed vowel sounds as in the word "television" that confuse Spanish speakers continually. Twin words are also bothersome. Spanish has a few (esta/está, el/él, como cómo, que/qué, etc.) and at least marks them in their written form. English has far more twin words and provides no written cues to allow one to pronounce them correctly. Generally, however, nouns are stressed on the first

syllable, while verbs are generally stressed on the second. Compare ínsult/insúlt, récord/recórd, prótest/protést, éxport/expórt, próduce/produce, óbject/objéct, and présent/presént.

9. Ideas or sentences.
We have already mentioned the fact that Spanish often omits the subject of a sentence. English, of course, does not. In addition, there is no Spanish equivalent to the use of do in questions such as "Do you speak Spanish?" In Spanish we would say, "Ud. entiende el inglés?"

10. Gestures. Gestures also differ. Compare Spanish with English gestures for the following: "Hello. Come here. May I speak to you for a minute?" and the gesture for the height of things, animals and people. What does a yawn mean for some Spanish speakers? (you're hungry) and for most English speakers? (You're sleepy.)

11. Idiomatic Expressions. Also vary from one culture to another.

    a. similies. How would you translate the following: "He's sleeping like a log." (Duerme como una piedra.) "He's skinny as a rail." (Es tan flaco como un palillo.) "He's ugly as sin." (Es tan feo como un espanto.)

    b. slang. How would you translate the following: "He kicked the bucket." (Estiró la pata.) or "You're just pulling my leg." (Me está tomando del pelo.) or "Heads or tails." (Cara o sello.)

    c. anomatopoeia. How do you express pain in English? (Ouch!) In Spanish? (Ay, yay, yay!) Something that falls in English goes crash. In Spanish it goes ¡cataplum! In English to call someone, you say, "Hey!" In Spanish, it's "ch-ch" or "pst-pst". What sounds do animals make in English and Spanish? Dogs, for example, say "bow-wow" or "arf-arf". Spanish speaking dogs say "wow-wow".

In this exercise we have compared English and Spanish superficially in eleven different areas. I hope that this has proved interesting and that you will do your own research to find additional examples for each linguistic component listed above.

CONCLUSIONS

Cross-cultural communication is an immense and exciting field. In these few pages I have been able to touch upon only a few of the many topics that fall within its realm. Possibilities for cross-cultural comparison are limitless. A few which I did not discuss here but which might prove interesting to your students are dating, cooking, and eating habits, religion, holidays, music, styles of dancing, parties, clothing, sports and the use of leisure time.

The benefits of cross-cultural understanding are also important. We obtain a clearer understanding of how our own culture functions as well as how another culture works while engaged in cultural comparison.

Through cross-cultural communication, students should come to see the language they are struggling to learn as something more than verb conjugations and irregular plurals. They should see it as the verbal representation of an entire culture -- a living and growing entity, changing as the culture changes, growing as it grows. This, in turn, should make language learning a more interesting and worthwhile endeavor.

Literature is an excellent source of information leading to cultural insight. Since writing systems were developed, poets have been describing the ideals, hopes, passions, adventures, accomplishments, failures and follies of the cultures in which they lived. We can learn a lot from literature. We must keep in mind, however, that with few exceptions (perhaps Homer, Cervantes, Chaucer and Shakespeare and maybe a few others) writers depict only that small part of their culture which they knew.

Faulkner portrays the American South of 30 years ago. Hawthorne wrote more than 130 years ago about New England. Consequently, time and cultural biases must be identified as we read. We should remember that what was true in the world even 25 years ago is probably not true today.

Think of how the world has changed in 25 years: New worlds exist; man has been to the moon; the president of the United States has been to the Soviet Union and to the People's Republic of China. Who would have thought these things possible 25 years ago?

When you read to understand a foreign culture, study the literature of the past to learn general cultural tendencies, but don't expect anything written more than 10 years ago (perhaps 5 is more accurate) to tell you what is happening there today. But currently relevant information is available. All you have to do is check the date of publication.

Many people feel that language learning is a waste of time. They feel that students' time could be better spent in some other academic activity. I disagree completely with this opinion. International understanding could go a long way towards solving some of the world's important problems. We, as language teachers, are in the business of promoting international understanding. If our students in the United States and in Latin America grow and if they can communicate with each other with cultural sensitivity, who is to say what the benefits will be? I firmly believe that learning a foreign language will lead us closer to that ideal world all of us dream of. The task has been identified for us, but it is we who must show the results. Can we? I think so.

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